



# 18<sup>th</sup> Annual FAMILY LEARNING WEEKEND for FAMILIES OF Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children June 13-15, 2014

What: MSDB 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Learning Weekend for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Where: MSDB Campus in Great Falls  
When: June 13-15, 2014  
Who: Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children living in Montana!  
Why: IT WILL BE FUN!!

The Learning Weekend is a creative program providing opportunities for families of sensory impaired children to learn about deafness, share their experiences with other families, and learn how to communicate more fully with one another in a warm, caring atmosphere.

The focus of the weekend is to enhance each individual's personal knowledge of deafness and how it relates to the education and development of their child. Informal workshops, group discussions (parent groups, kids' groups, siblings' groups, etc.) and hands-on activities will be offered. Child care and recreation for the children (siblings included) is available at no charge. Families will be reimbursed for mileage at the current state rate.

Housing is provided on a first-come first-serve basis. Each family is generally provided with their own suite of rooms in the cottages and efforts are made to make assignments according to individual needs and preferences. Typically each family has their own bathroom, sometimes two, depending on the size of the family. **Participants need to bring personal items such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste. Make sure you bring your swimsuit!**

## Children's Programs:

The children are divided into groups based mostly on age. Many factors are taken into consideration including friendships, maturity level, and interests when putting together the groups. The children stay with their groups until they join the parents for mealtime. MSDB's finest residential and school staff will be responsible for supervising your children and making sure they enjoy the day as much as you do!

**Birth to two:** Children will be in the pre-school room in Bitterroot with staff. *Parents should pick up their children prior to lunch and dinner and return them to the same location when they are done eating.*

**Three to five:** Children will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day. These activities will include snacks, program practice, indoor and outdoor activities including a trip to the MSDB playground (weather permitting). Swimming, with parents, in the Mustang Center will be available for this age group from 4:45–5:45. The activities for this group will remain flexible depending on the ages and abilities of the participants.

**Six through eighteen:** Saturday morning after the group picture, children will re-join their assigned teams which are designed for children to be involved with peers. There will be several activities including program practice, recreation activities and snacks. In addition, a representative from the Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) will have fun projects for the children to enjoy. MTAP will talk about technology, including using a TTY, the Relay Service, etc. Also during the morning session Yvette Smail, MSDB Behavior Specialist, will meet with hearing siblings providing them an opportunity to discuss their feelings regarding having a deaf sibling. Deaf and Hard of Hearing children will meet separately to share their thoughts as well. *This information (while keeping siblings' names confidential) will be shared with the parents during the Sunday morning presentation.*

*\*\*\*The kids program is intended to provide entertainment and educational activities that will further the participants understanding of deafness and its impact on the family. Activities are designed for youth with hearing loss and for their siblings. Participants are grouped by age and staff are assigned accordingly, depending on the numbers of the participants and their individual needs. If you have unique concerns regarding your child, please let us know and we will work with you to insure that everyone has a good time.*

*Information from various vendors (serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing) will be available throughout the weekend.*

## **Presenter Bios**

(Several of the Presenter Bio's were NOT available at Press Time)

### **Hillary Q. Carter, Au.D. Doctor of Audiology**

Dr. Carter has been practicing as an audiologist since 2002. She received her Doctorate of Audiology in 2005 from Salus University. She began her career and spent about 5 years in Western New York and moved to Helena in 2007 to be closer to home. She grew up in South Dakota. Dr. Carter is a member of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, Montana Speech, Language and Hearing Association and Montana Audiology Guild. She has three young boys and two dogs. Her and her family enjoys camping, hiking, boating and being outdoors. She has recently become a runner and is planning on completing her first half marathon this year. Her presentation **"Hearing Aids and Beyond"** will be about things to consider in regards to hearing aid fittings. However, the main focus will be accessory devices including FM, Bluetooth, Streaming, Loops and reviewing terminology with the accessory equipment.

**Frank Podobnik** currently serves as the State Special Education Director for the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Frank is the father of three sons, two of whom were students with disabilities. He began his career in education as a school psychologist in 1994 and worked in the Great Falls and Butte school districts. Frank has worked for the OPI since 2002 as a full and part-time compliance monitor, dispute resolution facilitator, IDEA grant manager, and for the last year, state director. Frank has worked with teachers, families and students with disabilities throughout his career.

**Matthew Rider, MSED, LCPC** is the Training Coordinator at the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University. Matt earned his BA in Criminology and Psychology from The Ohio State University in 1990 and his MSED in Community Counseling from Youngstown State University in 1995. He is the Training Coordinator for the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University. He is also the owner/manager of Inertia Counseling, LLC, an agency that provides individual psychotherapy for children, adolescents, adults and families. Over the past twenty years Matt has worked with children and adolescents in a variety of school and clinical settings. He has published two articles on spirituality and the human condition. Matt continues to present nationally on a variety of issues including verbal de-escalation, avoiding and resolving power struggles, family dynamics and communication, mental health issues of children and adolescents in therapeutic foster care and adoption, sexual abuse, human sexuality education, lethality assessment in suicidal youth, and many more. Matt is a Montana Learning Weekend veteran presentation and always keeps the audience captivated with his presentation!

**Donna Sorensen** has studied and worked in the field of Deaf Education since 1988. Her BA is in Deaf Education from the University of Montevallo and her MA is in Parent-Infant Education from Gallaudet University. She completed an Interpreter Training Program in Seattle. She is also a National Board Certified Teacher. She served in the United States Peace Corps from 2003-2005 teaching deaf students in Webuye, Kenya. After returning to the States, she got her principal certification from Washington State University. She is currently studying in the Teacher for Visual Impairments program at Texas Tech University. She loves to keep learning! Donna has been the MSDB Outreach Program Supervisor since December 2012 and has the opportunity to travel the state and visit many families, schools and other professionals in the field.

**Shawn Tulloch** is the Program Manager - Deaf Services in the Disability Employment and Transition Division. She works with the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and staff. She has 17 years under her belt teaching deaf and hard of hearing children in Washington DC, Vermont, Arizona, and Montana. Shawn volunteers her time in the Gallatin Association of the Deaf and Montana Association of the Deaf.

# Deaf Learning Weekend 2014 Schedule

(subject to change)

## Friday, June 13, 2014

- 4:00-6:00 Check in – Yellowstone Cottage.  
 6:00-6:30 Tour – Especially helpful for first time attendees.  
 6:30-7:15 Dinner – pizza, salad and dessert in the MSDB main dining room.  
 7:15-8:00 *Ice Breaker* – getting to know the participants a bit earlier in the weekend.  
 8:00-9:00 *Teen Panel* – opportunity for teens to share their experiences and answer any audience questions (this is a **must** for the parents).  
 7:15-9:00 All of the children will go to the Mustang Center to meet their “groups” and work on the program for Saturday night.  
 9:00 Pick up your kids from the Mustang Center.

## Saturday, June 14, 2014

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in the main dining room.  
 8:45-9:00 Group Picture – All Participants together in front of the big sign (each family will get a “Memory Book” at the end of the weekend to take home).  
 9:00-12:00 *Matt Rider – Advocating for Your Child’s Education: A Guide for Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students*  
 Deafness is a low-incident disability. According to the Center for Health Statistics, approximately 1% of the population is identified as deaf or hard of hearing. Special education programs in regular educational settings are often unprepared for the unique accommodations needed by deaf and hard of hearing students. When schools have limited resources for their students with ISFPs, IEPs and 504 Plans, they can often make decisions regarding your child’s educational needs based on the availability of their resources instead of the unique needs of your specific child. This workshop examines the tenuous relationships forged between school administrators and parents of deaf and hard of hearing students. In this workshop you will learn practical strategies which promote collaboration and consensus with schools as you advocate for the best interests of your deaf or hard of hearing child.  
 12:00-1:30 Lunch  
 12:45-2:00 *Pick one session (these same sessions will be offered again at 2:15-3:00 so you can pick another too)*  
  - *OPI – IEP’s – Frank Podobnik and OPI* will review the laws, some changes and provide you with information to help develop an **effective and useful IEP** for your child!
  - *ASL – Donna Sorensen* – Donna will present a **“Fun Session” on ASL** that will be new and exciting
  - *VR 101- Shawn Tulloch* – Shawn will present the **basic information and facts about VR** and how the services may benefit your child as they enter the post high school world.
  - *Dr. Hillary Carter* will discuss **“Hearing Aids and Beyond”** . . . about things to consider in regards to hearing aid fittings. However, the main focus will be accessory devices including FM, Bluetooth, Streaming, Loops and reviewing terminology with the accessory equipment
 2:15-3:30 Repeat of previous sessions (pick one (1))  
 3:35-4:45 Parent groups (two sessions for the mom’s and one for the dad’s)  
 4:45-5:45 Open swim time for families  
 6:00-6:45 BBQ – in the main dining room.  
 7:00-7:30 *Children’s Show* – the children have been practicing all day to put on a short performance for the parents. **Bring your cameras and tissue!**  
 7:40-9:00 Parent Panel – this has also been a favorite of the weekend. Listen to parents as they share their story about their journey with their child. It is uplifting and empowering to be a part of this presentation (as a participant or a member of the audience).  
 9:30 Pick up your kids from the cottages as they will be watching movies and eating snacks

## Sunday, June 15, 2014

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast  
 9:00-10:00 *Montana Telecommunications Access Program* will present about their program.  
 10:00-10:30 Break  
 10:30-11:30 *Successful Family-Adult Presentation* – Not Determined at Press Time  
 11:30 - *Sibling Summary* – listen to what your children have to say about having a deaf or hard of hearing sibling AND also what the deaf or hard of hearing kids think about living in a hearing family! Some surprises and thought provoking information for all parents.  
 12:00 Lunch in the dining room and then families depart



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**WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT MSDB's FAMILY LEARNING WEEKENDS!**

*"I think every family with a deaf child should come to at least one to see if it's helpful to them – we love it and learn each and every time we come to MSDB!"*

*"I like that my brother feels welcome and fits in every time he is here and I support him."*

*"I was very impressed with MSDB in general. I had no idea that this was such a 'gem'. Montana is very lucky."*

*"Informative, we met a lot of amazing families, the staff was great and the kids had fun"*

*"Seeing all the kids together is the best part! We always learn something new that helps us with our lives!"*

*"The staff are great, always different options for presenters – changes every year"*

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**Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind**

3911 Central Avenue  
Great Falls, MT  
59405

1 800 882-MSDB

[www.msdb.mt.gov](http://www.msdb.mt.gov)

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